



"Communities should show more support for youth. It would be nice if youth could grow up in safe neighborhoods with lots of positive after school activities, including recreation, and better job opportunities."

Alana Harris, Cluster Resident and CRS youth planner

Cluster 1's Vision For Youth Development Is...

Cluster 1 youth live in a community that values and nurtures the Cluster's most precious resource. Young people thrive in a safe and stimulating environment that encourages and supports their intellectual, physical and spiritual development. Drawing upon broad community support, Cluster 1 is responsive to the changing needs of its young residents and encourages their participation as stakeholders and future leaders of the community.

Youth Development Reinvestment Issues

Youth development reinvestment recommendations for Cluster 1 include recommendations for physical improvements, but primarily focus on policy and programmatic issues. However, the development of a large scale, features-rich "regional" recreation center and upgrading of existing recreation centers are high priorities for the Cluster.

Programmatically, community residents support the full utilization of existing resources rather than "reinventing the wheel". For example, churches, recreation centers, public libraries and schools are Cluster resources which can be tapped to better meet the programmatic needs of youth. Further, reinvesting in youth development requires the ongoing input and participation of young people. Therefore, more block club and community-based organizations should actively promote the participation of youth in community development activities—as key stakeholders and not simply as "gofers" and distributors of flyers.

Summary of Prioritized Youth Development Reinvestment Recommendations

1. Establish a large-scale "regional" state-of-the-art recreation/multi-purpose community center at Farwell Field.
2. Fully utilize churches, recreation centers, public schools and libraries through extended hours and increased resources to deliver cultural, educational and other youth programs.
3. Expand job training and employment opportunities through the Detroit Public Schools and other sources.
4. Improve smaller existing neighborhood recreation/multi-purpose centers by providing basic amenities and establishing and maintaining "minimum" standards.
5. Increase safety in schools through conflict resolution training and more stringent weapons checks in schools and recreation centers.

6. Promote proper maintenance of public parks through increased City resources, collaborative partnerships and park “adoption”, and contracting landscaping services to local community-based businesses.
7. Augment City resources and stabilize financial support for recreation centers by funding through property tax millages.

Detailed Description of Physical/Facility Youth Development Reinvestment Recommendations

1. Establish a “Regional” Recreation Center at Farwell Field

Located on Eight Mile Road between Ryan and Mound Roads, Farwell Field provides a relatively central Cluster location and offers the space required for a large “regional” recreation facility. The “regional” recreation center should have more amenities, including a swimming pool, than a smaller “neighborhood” or community recreation center and have the capacity to serve a greater number of participants. Presently, there are *no* recreation centers of this type within Cluster 1. Further, a community the size of Cluster 1, which has a higher proportion of youth than the city overall (32% vs. 29%), cannot adequately serve this population without such a facility.

The following list summarizes the amenities that a regional recreation center should have, in addition to the *basic* amenities provided in smaller neighborhood recreation centers:

- ❖ Swimming pool
- ❖ Shower facilities
- ❖ Tennis courts
- ❖ Library
- ❖ Meeting space
- ❖ Sauna rooms

2. Improve Existing Neighborhood Recreation Centers

Provide *basic* amenities for smaller neighborhood/community recreation centers and maintain facilities appropriately.

- ❖ Gymnasium
- ❖ Playground equipment
- ❖ Game room
- ❖ Exercise equipment
- ❖ Computer center

Detailed Description of Policy/Programmatic Youth Development Reinvestment Recommendations

1. Fully Utilize Churches, Rec Centers and Public Schools to Deliver Youth Programs & Services

Existing facilities and institutions should be more fully utilized in the delivery of youth programs and services. Current programs can be expanded and new programs can be developed as needed to meet the needs of Cluster youth. Schools and churches can offer structured classes and programs such as:

- ❖ Mentoring programs
- ❖ Tutoring programs
- ❖ Violence prevention programs
- ❖ Youth leadership programs
- ❖ Community service programs

Recreation centers in particular can and should take advantage of their access to youth and include more recreational *and* non-recreational programs.

2. Expand job Training Programs

Cooperative programs that introduce youth to a range of career opportunities and provide them with experience in an actual work setting, should be available through the Detroit Public Schools. The schools should also expand existing programs to include more of the following:

- ❖ Cooperative work/school programs
- ❖ Internships
- ❖ Job readiness and placement programs
- ❖ Vocational training

3. Increased Safety in Schools

In addition to offering conflict resolution training in the Cluster through local organizations and institutions, public safety can be enhanced through more stringent weapons checks in schools and recreation centers.

4. Promote proper maintenance of public parks through increased City resources, collaborative partnerships with community-based organizations and park “adoption”, and contracting landscaping services to local community-based businesses

As indicated in the Environment Reinvestment Recommendations section, community-based organizations can play a role in maintaining public parks in the Cluster. Community-based landscaping business can be developed to assist the City with park maintenance and also provide a source of revenue for Cluster-based development organizations.

5. **Augment City resources and stabilize financial support for recreation centers by funding through property tax millages**

Well equipped and maintained recreation facilities require sufficient financial support if they are expected to meet the community's needs now and in the future. Supporting recreation centers through property tax millages as well as the City's Parks and Recreation Department can ensure that there is an adequate base of support for recreation facilities and programs.

6. **Public Transportation Improvements**

While transportation improvements are addressed at length in the Transportation sections of this report, transportation issues have a significant impact on youth development. The highest priority for mass transit improvements for youth is the distribution of discounted student passes. This will not only reduce the financial burden of getting to school, but will also encourage and enable youth to participate in after school programs and activities that are not within walking distance of their homes.